

Homeland Security Secretary Visits USNORTHCOM

Press Release

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PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. ? Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff recently made his first visit to U.S. Northern Command to familiarize himself with the mission of USNORTHCOM and how DHS and the command interact.

Chertoff?s visit included an office call with Adm. Timothy J. Keating, commander of the North American Aerospace Defense Command and USNORTHCOM. He received an overview briefing and discussed DHS and USNORTHCOM projects and potential future initiatives. Before conducting a media conference, Chertoff also met with some local DHS employees to get a better understanding of how the military and DHS work together.



Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff talks with media during his visit to the headquarters of the United States Northern Command, Peterson Air Force Base.

Photo credit: Petty Officer 1st Class Shane Wallenda, USN

Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff talks with media during his visit to the headquarters of the United States Northern Command, Peterson Air Force Base. NORAD-USNORTHCOM Commander Adm. Timothy J. Keating introduced Chertoff at the news conference.

Photo credit: Petty Officer 1st Class Shane Wallenda, USN

During the media conference, Chertoff said ?there is a need to build personal relationships between DHS and USNORTHCOM which will be needed to protect America.? This will ensure that these agencies are always working in tandem and getting the maximum benefit from our joint efforts, he added.

?I?m looking forward to working with Adm. Keating and the rest of USNORTHCOM to produce a more secure country.?

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Chertoff addressed border security and the new America's Shield Initiative, which is designed to keep terrorists out of the country.

"One of the challenges we face is controlling and securing our borders, both the northern border and the southern border," he said. "One way to do that is to give the Border Patrol agents on the ground the advantage of having top notch technology – sensors and other kinds of technologies – that help to identify where people are penetrating the border and how migrants are crossing the border."

America's shield will provide that technology, he said. "It is designed to put modern sensing equipment in the field, which will give up-to-date operational pictures of where the border is being penetrated and where we ought to put people. We are looking forward to getting America's Shield fully deployed and operational as part of our general strategy of securing our borders."

Chertoff said the command and DHS have a "good picture" of potential terrorist threats. "They have a plan to respond. Each event is a learning process, which helps us be prepared for any terrorist attack or natural disaster."

"I do think we have a very good level of an operating picture of what's going on in the world as it relates to homeland security. And I just want to make sure we are constantly learning from lessons of our experiences to tune up what we're doing and make it better."

Chertoff was sworn in as the second Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security in February.